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ABSTRACT

This report details a field study to evaluate the efforts of Pakistan's Primary Education Development Program (PED) to improve the access, equity, and quality of primary education in Pakistan, especially for rural girls. A 3-week visit was conducted in 1997 by a team from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Center for Development Information and Evaluation. Following a presentation of background on the project initiation, the report discusses strategies used to build and strengthen the primary educational system by strengthening public primary schools and building private education institutions; examines the strategies used to increase access to primary education such as opening more schools for girls and increasing the number of female teachers in rural areas; and discusses the issue of improving the quality of girls' education and of teacher education. Findings noted in the report indicate that the program resulted in more than 2,100 new girls' schools in the Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province, a 70 percent increase from 1989 through 1994. There was a substantial increase in girls' access to primary schools, with 348,000 girls enrolled in grades 1-5 in 1989 and 761,300 in 1996. Strategies identified as especially effective in achieving such rapid gains were: (1) communicating one clear goal--enrolling girls in primary school-- through policy changes and program activities; (2) opening more schools for girls; and (3) recruiting and training more female teachers for rural schools. The report concludes with a discussion of the USAID's leadership role and a presentation of lessons learned from this evaluation. (KB)

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ED 430 725

CDIE

Impact Evaluation

United States Agency for International Development

PROMOTING PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR GIRLS IN PAKISTAN

With only 38 out of 100 of its citizens able to read (and, for women, only 24 of 100), Pakistan has one of the world's highest illiteracy rates. Under a USAID program aimed at improving women's education, girls' enrollments more than tripled in Balochistan and more than doubled in North-West Frontier Province. Boys' education also benefited. The program has been less successful, though, in improving educational quality.

SUMMARY

Rural girls' primary school attendance mushroomed as a result of a 4½-year USAID/Pakistan Primary Education Development Program in Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province. Designed to improve access, equity, and quality of primary education, particularly for rural girls, the program resulted in more than 2,100 new girls' schools in the two provinces—a 70 percent increase. The stunning success of the program, which ran from 1989 through 1994, came despite a one-year suspension, a truncated time frame, and a sharply reduced budget.

The program led to a substantial increase in girls' access to primary schools. In the two provinces, 348,000 girls were en-

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May 1999

rolled in grades 1–5 in 1989; in 1996 that number was 761,300. Boys' enrollment increased, too, from 1.3 million in 1989 to 1.6 million in 1996.

These were some of the findings of a three-person team from USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE). The team visited Pakistan for three weeks in 1997 to assess the Primary Education Development (PED) Program. The evaluation is one of five field studies of girls' education that also include Guatemala, Guinea, Malawi, and Nepal.

PED achieved the rapid gains in **primary school participation** by negotiating policies that developed and strengthened new primary institutions and supported new programs. Three strategies were especially effective:

1. *Communicating one clear goal—enrolling girls in primary school—through policy changes and program activities.* Everyone from the secretary of education to the heads of village education committees understood this goal; many agreed with it and worked to achieve it.

2. *Opening more schools for girls.* With PED grants, schools were constructed in unprecedented numbers. New strategies for developing schools for girls, such as a Community Support Program and "fellowship schools" in Balochistan and "genderless" schools in North-West Frontier Province, rapidly expanded schooling opportunities for rural girls. (Fellowship schools are private urban nonformal schools for girls.)

3. *Recruiting and training more female teachers for rural schools.* In Balochistan, policy initiatives eliminated age and education barriers to recruiting local teachers. In North-West Frontier Province, initiatives eliminated transfers out and temporary postings to remote schools.

PED took a systems approach to getting girls into school. Policy discussions stimulated awareness and consensus about the goal of educating girls, and program funds supported new primary education institutions to provide the schools girls needed.

Yet, policy discussions about **school quality** were minimal. Program initiatives were hampered by the absence of a shared vision of what quality education should look like and who was responsible for making it happen. Nonetheless, there were some notable programmatic achievements. Among them:

- A phonetic approach to teaching Urdu, the national language, incorporated in the national curriculum
- Improved instructional materials in both provinces
- Extensive teacher training using condensed versions of existing training programs
- Achievement testing in North-West Frontier Province

Under the evaluation team's direction, short competency tests were administered to a small sample of female students in both provinces. Girls in the second grade demonstrated basic numeracy skills, and girls in the third grade demonstrated rote reading skills in Urdu. Achievement test results in North-West Frontier Province show that, on average, students do not achieve competency on more than half the material in the 5th-grade curriculum. PED research at the teacher training colleges showed that the teachers' mastery of the content barely exceeded that of the students. The national curriculum, which both provinces follow, is challenging by the standards of many countries and is perhaps age-inappropriate for the students in the first few years, particularly since many entering students do not speak Urdu as a first language.

The PED Program ensured that local organizations and strong, permanent institutions had vested interests in the education of girls. PED helped communities organize to demand and support locally based primary education. It also built institutions that support primary schools, including public directorates of primary education and private nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). As a result, the momentum of change was strong enough to be self-sustaining when USAID pulled out of Pakistan halfway through PED. Both provinces sought and found support from other donors to sustain the program.

'The momentum of change was strong enough to be self-sustaining when USAID pulled out of Pakistan halfway through PED. Both provinces sought and found support from other donors to sustain the program.'

Despite this strong foundation, the endurance of gains made under PED faces several threats. These include the continued poor quality of girls' classroom experiences, the large number of communities still needing the assistance of NGOs to organize parent education committees, fast-growing populations, scarce financial resources, and the lack of role models and opportunities for educated girls.

PED's emphasis on educating girls had positive fallout for boys. Under PED more schools were constructed for boys than were built for girls. Not only did the number of boys' schools substantially increase, but boys also were given new, and perhaps better, educational options in new girls' schools. Female teachers are reported to be more reliable, to be absent less often, to not sexually abuse students, and to use corporal punishment more judiciously. Consequently, some families opt to enroll younger boys in girls' schools. Because all of the girls and some of the younger boys transfer to a new girls' school, the availability of girls' schools reduces the number of students in boys' classrooms.

BACKGROUND

In May 1997, USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) launched Focus on Girls: An Evaluation of USAID Programs and Policies in Education. This five-country evaluation seeks to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of USAID policies and programs to increase girls' access to primary education, improve the quality of education they receive, and strengthen primary educational institutions. (Other countries studied are Guatemala, Guinea, Malawi, and Nepal.) One of the programs selected for a field study was USAID/Pakistan's Primary Education Development Program. During May 1997, a three-person CDIE evaluation team spent three weeks in Pakistan assessing the extent to which PED strategies increased girls' participation and improved the quality of primary education in Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province.

Pakistan's Primary Education Development Program

In 1989, USAID/Pakistan authorized $280 million in grant funds to support PED. It was designed as a 10-year program to provide balance-of-payments support to Pakistan and to lay the groundwork for sustained economic and social development by encouraging policy reforms in education. PED's goal was to help Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province build institutional capacity and implement poli-

cies to improve access to, and equity and quality of, primary education, particularly for rural girls. The program offered contract technical advisers in addition to policy dialog and financial support.

Almost 80 percent of PED resources were invested in school construction. The remainder supported programs to develop public primary education institutions, strengthen the capabilities of nongovernmental organizations in support of primary education, expand teacher training, recruit female teachers, and improve curricula. Girls' enrollments were projected to triple, while boys' enrollments were expected to nearly double. That would significantly reduce gender inequities in Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province.

When the United States had to curtail assistance to Pakistan (under the Pressler Amendment, which places restrictions on developing countries implementing nuclear weapons programs) the PED Program was reduced from 10 to 4.5 years, and the program budget was reduced from $280 million to $77 million. When USAID withdrew, the World Bank offered complete support for PED in Balochistan. In North-West Frontier Province a consortium of donors picked up many elements of the program. It is an indication of PED's rapid and significant impact on primary education and the schooling of girls in both provinces that it was sustained.

Girls' Education: The Economic And Cultural Context

In 1989 Pakistan had a population of 110 million; in 1996 the population was estimated to be 134 million and growing at a rate of almost 3 percent a year. In 1996, gross national product (GNP) per capita was $480. Women aged 15–44 bore an average of 5.6 live children. In 1996 the infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births was 88. Balochistan, Pakistan's largest and least developed province, contains only 5 percent of the country's population, with the majority of its inhabitants widely scattered in rural areas. North-West Frontier Province, the smallest province, is home to 12 percent of Pakistan's people and is densely inhabited. It has much better road and transportation systems than Balochistan. The two provinces share Islamic religious traditions, but each has a distinctive mix of ethnic and tribal groups that play critical roles in defining gender roles and the patterns of family and individual lives.

The status of women is considerably worse in South Asia than in most of the rest of the world, and within South Asia, Pakistan has one of the worst records in female health and education. According to the 1981 population census,* 1.8 percent of rural women were literate in Balochistan and 3.8 percent in North-West Frontier Province. The World Health Organization estimated the maternal mortality rate in 1990 at 3.4 per 1,000 live births. With 108 men for every 100 women, Pakistan is one of the few countries in the world where men outnumber women.

Women's reported share of the formal labor force is very low—13 percent—compared with 35 percent for all developing countries. However, this figure does not fully take into account women working in the informal sector. Women's productive contribution to the economy goes unrecognized as most of their work is unpaid. While a minority of women, mostly from upper-class families, have worked their way into high positions in the government and have become doctors, scientists, and business owners, most Pakistani women lead lives of physical hardship involving long hours of nonpaying, tedious chores.

*This was the last census. Population growth rates subsequently hovered around 3 percent. Denominators for education participation rates are extrapolations from the 1981 census data, and thus participation rates are rough estimates.

Tribal customs in both Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province regard women as objects of male ownership whose purity must be cautiously guarded. Rural women are confined to family compounds and local villages. Segregation of the sexes is one of the tools used to reinforce male domination and the marginalization of women. When PED began, public schools in both provinces were single-sex, run by separate male and female administrations.

Status of Education Before PED

In 1988–89, only 2.4 percent of the GNP went to education, compared with the 4.0 percent of GNP recommended by Unesco for developing countries. Most schools in rural areas of Balochistan and many of the schools in the rural areas of North-West Frontier Province were shelterless. The profile of primary schooling in the provinces (see table 1) in 1989 attests to the need for primary education development and its emphasis on girls.

With small numbers of rural boys and girls completing primary school, and with population growth rapidly outstripping traditional productivity, there was little doubt in 1989 that education was a good target for promoting economic and social development.

Table 1. Gender Status of Education, Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province, 1989

	Balochistan	North-West Frontier Province
Gender ratio of schools, girls:boys	<1:6	<1:2
Percent of girls enrolled in school	14	28
Percent of boys enrolled in school	70	79
Percent of rural girls enrolled in school	4	<12
Percent of rural boys enrolled in school	<30	<66
Percent of dropout, rural girls	93	78
Percent of dropout, rural boys	<75	<75

BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING A PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Primary Education Development Program supported the creation and strengthening of primary education institutions, both public and private. PED grants to the provincial governments required the creation of primary education directorates and annual budget increases for primary education. Primary education expenditures increased 18 percent in North-West Frontier Province and 10 percent in Balochistan. This well exceeded the initial targets of 8 and 5 percent, respectively. Because rural girls and female teachers are concentrated in primary grades, investing in primary schools is essential to ensure gender equity in education.

Strengthening Public Primary Schools

Poor management of primary education was a fundamental weakness in both provinces. Problems included absenteeism, corruption, internal politics, lack of accountability, selective enforcement of rules, poor-quality construction and maintenance, favoritism in personnel selection and resource allocation, and poor morale and work ethic of the civil service—especially primary teachers.

Although 70 percent of students in the two provinces were in primary schools in 1989, only 40 percent of staff and 30 percent of education resources were dedicated to pri-

mary education. All education resources were managed by the directorates of education and schools. These centers were staffed by professionals whose expertise and interest were usually in secondary and higher education. Primary education teachers had low pay and low status.

PED adopted a strategy of *creating* and *strengthening* institutions rather than *reforming* institutions. The reasoning was that new primary institutions would protect primary education resources more effectively than existing institutions with vested interests in secondary schools and colleges. With this objective, directorates of *primary* education were created to do the following: 1) upgrade the management and financial resources for primary education, 2) center attention on primary-level problems, 3) support innovation and initiatives, and 4) attract competent teachers by raising the economic and social value of primary school educators.

Resources were diverted from existing education directorates to create the directorates of primary education, and that created resistance to the new institutions. The Senior Educational Staff Association, a union of senior-level male administrators who were secondary-level educators, successfully opposed establishing a directorate of primary education in Balochistan from 1989 to 1993. In North-West Frontier Province, the directorate was created rapidly but suffered passive resistance and a rigid, rule-oriented bureaucracy that inhibited innovation and made planning and decision-making arduous.

The autonomy of the directorates of primary education was compromised in the struggle to create them. For example, as PED began in both provinces, all staff above grade 11 initially reported to the directors of education and schools/secondary directorate, including managers for primary schools. Thus the highest ranking field staff that reported to the directorates of primary education were the learning coordinators—the fourth rung down from the district education officers who run all school operations at the district level. Despite great progress, professionalization of primary education specialists is not yet a reality.

The district education officers are the field managers of primary schools and teachers, but they are often appointed for political reasons. Their loyalties and futures rest with the secondary, not the primary, directorates. To move up in the education hierarchy, many district education officers seek frequent transfers and move out of primary education. They perform according to their personal commitment and competence, and their authority is inconsistent and relies in part on political connections. The results at the school level are uneven. Unless the directorates of primary education and their district education officers' authority, autonomy, and professionalism are strengthened, the most capable educators will continue to avoid careers in primary institutions.

The directorates of primary education have developed an institutional identity and culture, and because they serve the majority of the student population, they have a natural grass-roots constituency. Despite their short histories, these institutions appear permanent. They control the education management information systems, which collect and manage the flow of information from semiannual school censuses (begun in 1990) to district and provincial offices. Controlling the information systems gives the primary directorates unique power. The powerful teachers unions now have a stake in the continuity of the directorates, since directorates have control over increases in schools and teachers' posts and upgrading the status of primary teachers and managers. Donors (e.g., the World Bank, UNICEF, the German Technical Cooperation Agency, and the European Union) are all solidly behind stronger, dedicated primary institutions and might resist sector investments if these institutions were dismantled.

The greatest threat to the new directorates is ineffectiveness. If they are sustained because they pose no threat to the authority of the secondary education establishment, they will become resources for cronyism and dumping grounds for the least capable educators. The directorates have not yet reformed teacher training, supervision, performance, and promotion. They are not systematically improving and implementing curricular changes and instructional materials. They have not solved the quandary of district-level managers who are incompetent, corrupt, or uncommitted to primary education. These would be great challenges for strong institutions with solid resource bases. They are positively daunting for young, weak institutions struggling to control resources and attract capable staff.

Building Private Education Institutions

Community Support Program. In Balochistan, PED established a unique community-based system of girls' schools. A nongovernmental organization, the Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan, was established to implement this Community Support Program (see box 1). Working in a number of villages, community education promoters identified prospective female teachers and

Box 1. Community Support Program

Before PED, girls' schools were a rarity in rural Balochistan villages. In mid-1997 more than 780 Community Support Program schools were operating in Balochistan, enrolling approximately one fifth of girls in primary schools.

When PED began to address the low school participation of girls in villages, it was the conventional wisdom that the community was not interested in educating girls or creating girls' schools. PED contracted a dynamic Pakistani woman, Quartul Ain Bakhteari, who developed the Community Support Process. Using a process of dialog, village after village explored the demand for girls' education. Each village examined its resources, human, financial, and in-kind, and made a plan to recruit a local teacher and open a school. With PED support, demand for girls' education was documented, and a dynamic community organizer began working with the residents. A nongovernmental organization, the Society for Community Support of Primary Education in Balochistan, was founded to replicate the Community Support Process and help other NGOs use it.

In Balochistan the Community Support Process was implemented by public–private–community partnerships of *NGOs* responsible for exploring local demand for girls' education, identifying potential teachers, and mobilizing communities; by *communities* responsible for working with their local teacher, ensuring girls' enrollment and attendance, and maintaining a village education committee; and by the *provincial government*, which funded the program, trained teachers, paid salaries, supplied instructional materials, and (after three years) built schools for the communities.

The Community Support Program initiative, as well as fellowship and home schooling initiatives, sparked patterns of civic participation, new to many communities. Rural communities are composed of family compounds. Most interaction is within family networks, and there is an absence of extrafamilial associations defined by common goals. The village education committees are often the first experience of civic participation for rural residents, especially for women who traditionally have no formal role in community decision-making.

The Society for Community Support of Primary Education in Balochistan has continued to grow, refine the community support process, and provide training and leadership to other NGOs that now implement the program in other districts. The community support process has become more effective and efficient. For example, communities, rather than NGOs, now assess their own needs and resources, and the villages have more ownership of the problems and solutions they discover. NGOs benefit well, since community management allows them discretion to spend less or more time in each village, depending on its need.

formed village education committees composed of parents, grandparents, or guardians of school-age girls. Each committee donated land and a building for a new school, supported the local teachers in their new role, and monitored students' progress. Signed agreements committed the government to training and paying new teachers and to building a permanent school within three years. PED and UNICEF also cofinanced the establishment of 90 community schools in North-West Frontier Province.

Private schools. Girls' options are more limited than boys' because there are fewer government schools for girls and few private schools for girls, owing in part to low demand. Many communities met only some of the criteria for Community Support Program schools but nevertheless wanted to establish a girls' school. USAID and other donors supported an organization called the Balochistan Education Foundation in 1993 to give both urban and rural communities more options through grants and small endowments for opening private schools for girls. Most rural communities that pursued fellowship status did so because no local woman met Community Support Program criteria for teaching. Fellowship communities hire male teachers (usually older men) in their communities, bus in a female teacher, or hire an outsider.

The Frontier Education Foundation in North-West Frontier Province had a similar objective of encouraging the establishment of girls' schools in rural areas. By 1994 it had received a contribution of 100 million rupees (about $3.3 million) from the provincial government and 50 million rupees more from the PED Program.

In the fellowship programs, the annual grant funds decrease over the course of several years, and the communities pick up an increasing share of school costs. Student fees and endowment income eventually become the sole financial support for the schools. Program priority was given to rural schools and those catering to girls' education. In Balochistan in 1996, 10 fellowship schools were operating in the provincial capital, Quetta, and 30 were operating in rural communities. Despite the promise of this initiative, participation is limited, and financial sustainability will be a challenge when the grants phase out in rural communities with scarce cash.

The Habib Bank Trust supported home schools in the slum areas of Quetta and the nearby town of Pishin. These are an alternative to formal schooling for girls who are unable to attend regular government schools, either because there are none close by or because the girls must work at home in the morning and need more flexible scheduling. In addition, a Balochistan girls' scholarship program was started to develop low-tuition private schools in urban and rural areas.

Gender Issues In Institution Building

Although primary education remains a low-status occupation, becoming a teacher is still considered in most villages a respectable, gainful, and admirable calling, especially for women. As new institutions, the directorates of primary education symbolized strength and professionalism for primary specialists, and in Balochistan the directorate building became a visible source of pride and tangible evidence that primary education commands respect.

Promotion possibilities for women in education remain limited compared with those of men, because women are concentrated in primary education and low civil service grades. But under PED, regulatory restrictions to women's promotions were eased. In North-West Frontier Province, the parallel structures of male and female district education officers, schools, and staffs offer new paths to seniority and promotion for women. Even so, there are quite a few men on the staffs of female district education officers.

The private and public sector institutions created with PED resources and guidance are, for the most part, directed by men. The CDIE team found itself mimicking the strategy of USAID five years earlier, requesting and eventually insisting that it meet with women.

INCREASING ACCESS TO PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education leaders, new directorates, communities, and parents aligned their efforts through one goal: enrolling girls in school.

Supply-Side Strategy To Increase Access To Education

PED successfully supported a rapid increase in girls' access to education, using a straightforward approach of opening more schools for girls near their homes and staffing those schools with trained local female teachers. This supply-side strategy was based on the results of a human resources survey (supported by USAID and UNICEF) and additional community-based research. The studies revealed that more than half of rural households wanted to send their young girls to school but lacked a nearby girls' school. Although single-sex schooling continues to be the norm in both provinces, research has revealed that demand for girls' education was so strong that about 3 percent of families enrolled their girls in boys' schools when no girls' school was available. However, almost all withdrew their daughters from these schools at around third grade—before puberty—when cultural prohibitions against mixed-sex seatings are critical. Few rural families invested in private schooling for girls, although many did so for boys. Almost half the boys educated in North-West Frontier Province attend private schools.

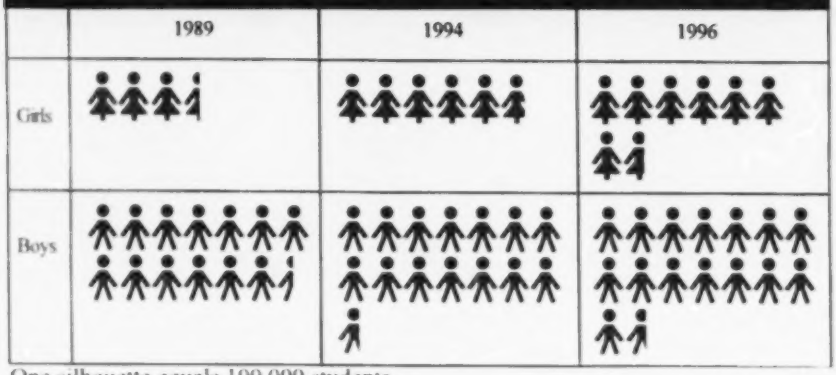
'From 1989 through 1994, during USAID's support for the PED Program, girls' enrollments in primary school increased 30 percent in Balochistan and 79 percent in North-West Frontier Province. Boys' enrollments in the province increased 13 percent and 9 percent, respectively.'

Rapid Increases In Girls' Primary School Enrollments

From 1989 through 1994, during USAID's support for the PED Program, girls' enrollments in primary school increased 30 percent in Balochistan and 79 percent in North-West Frontier Province. Boys' enrollments in the provinces increased 13 percent and 9 percent, respectively. After USAID's withdrawal in 1994, the PED Program continued with the support of other donors and USAID pipeline funds. From PED's inception to 1996, girls' enrollments more than tripled in Balochistan and more than doubled in North-West Frontier Province. Boys' enrollments during the same period rose almost 27 percent in Balochistan and 14 percent in North-West Frontier Province (see figure 1). In 1996, more than 30 percent of girls were estimated to be enrolled, up from an estimated 20 percent in 1990.*

*There are no reliable recent population-based demographic data. These percent enrollment rates are estimates based on projected data from a 1982 census.

Figure 1. Girls' and Boys' Gross Enrollment, Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province



One silhouette equals 100,000 students.

Creating New Schools

Under PED, more than 2,100 new girls' schools were opened in the two provinces—a 70 percent increase in less than five years. Despite this impressive increase, gender differentials in proximity and access to schools persist. More than two thirds of school-age girls are not in school. Given the limited options for girls, many of those who are enrolled face crowded classrooms. Pupil–teacher ratios in girls' schools are substantially higher (44:1) than in boys' schools (23:1).

'A School Is Not a Building'

PED's objective was equity of school access. Because about 80 percent of PED grant funds were dedicated to construction, one condition was that the ratio of girls' schools built to boys' schools built was at least 3 to 2. But the provincial governments did not meet that condition. (Table 2 tracks the respective increases in schools in Balochistan from 1989 through 1994.) As PED ended, only 16 percent of new school construction in Balochistan was for girls, and only 40 percent in North-West Frontier Province.

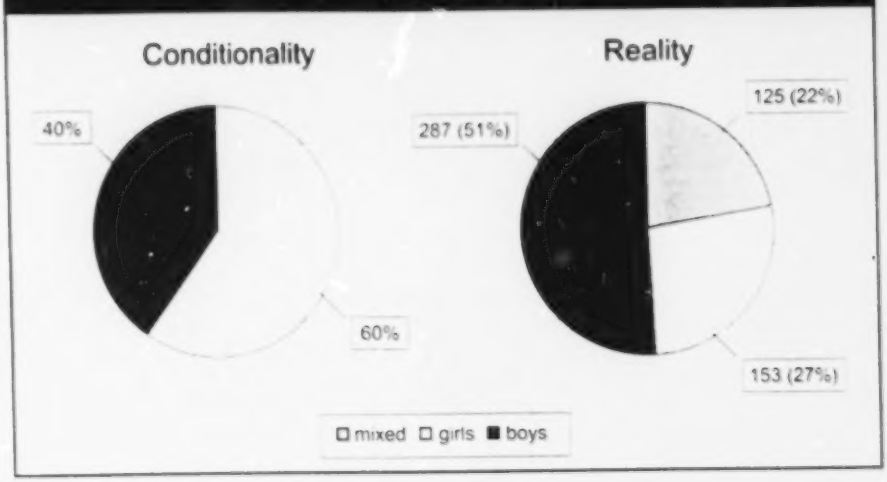
This resistance to redressing gender imbalance has persisted. PED has been sustained in its entirety in Balochistan by the World Bank. To respond to current provisions of the World Bank loan, the government of Balochistan has declared that any school with a girl enrolled is a "mixed" school and thus can be included in the count of girls' schools. Using this formula, Balochistan can claim that almost half of schools constructed were for girls. This still fails to meet the loans provisions. Furthermore, the mixed schools are all run by the boys' school administration, thus supporting gender discrimination in allocation of resources and power. These mixed schools represent no progress either, since research showed years ago that many boys' schools include some girls.

The number of girls' schools with buildings at the beginning of the PED Program was small in Balochistan; afterward, school buildings for girls almost quadrupled. Perhaps as a consequence of this striking multiplication, most stakeholders are under the optimistic but erro-

Table 2. Government-Supported Primary Schools, Balochistan

	Schools in Operation		
	1989	1994	Increase
Boys	3,091	4,095	+1,004
Girls	515	846	+331
Girls' schools as percentage of total	14	17	ratio G:B=33:100

Figure 2. Comparison Between Agreed-Upon School Construction and Actual Construction in Balochistan, 1989–94



neous impression that the government is aggressively building schools for girls. Although the girls' schools are disappointingly few, each new girls' building sends a salient message of commitment to girls' education. Furthermore, because of the Community Support Program approach in Balochistan, most girls' schools ostensibly are or will be built in response to community demand. For a limited investment that did not satisfy PED requirements, the provincial government has gotten positive press around the world and high visibility at home for its commitment to girls' schools.

Construction. Construction absorbed as much as 80 percent of PED investment. As figure 2 shows, construction was not equitable and did not meet the terms of agreement between Pakistan and USAID. The bulk of resources went to boys' schools. In both provinces senior officials for the directorates of primary education remarked that if they could start over, they might invest a smaller proportion of the funds in construction. "We learned," said one official, "that a school is not a building." PED reforms were incomplete: gender ratios continued to be biased against girls, and special interests continued to influence school investments. Nevertheless, conditionalities and USAID's engineering assistance resulted in more schools, of better quality construction, being built where they were needed, as well as more rational allocation of resources for repair, maintenance, and salaries for teachers and guards.

Monitoring. To ensure that teachers were paid and schools were built and maintained where students were underserved, data from education management information systems were overlaid on demographic and geographic data in geographic information systems. These layered maps of terrain, populations, schools, and communities show at a glance where concentrations of girls and boys lack nearby schools. These information systems have institutionalized a planning process that matches construction sites to concentrations of school-age children. They have also monitored student enrollments to further minimize the phenomenon of "ghost" schools and teachers—schools built but never used and teachers who were paid but never showed up to teach. PED eliminated hundreds of such schools and teachers' posts.

Maintenance and repair. Opportunism rather than need often dictated provision of supplies and services for school repair and maintenance. Some officials said the corruption problems were more severe for maintenance and repair than for construction. One district school official shared a tale of maintenance crews showing up to replace high-quality serviceable cabinets and locks with new, shoddy versions of the same. This was done in all schools in the district.

In an attempt to replicate the successes of the Community Support Program's village educational committees in managing maintenance and repair of buildings, provincial governments now are mandating formation of parent–teacher school management committees in Balochistan and parent–teacher associations in North-West Frontier Province. These groups will assume administrative control of schools to decentralize and rationalize the maintenance system. Without staff or resources for inspection and oversight of each school, decentralization is one of the few options open to the provincial governments to improve the efficiency of repair and maintenance. But communities need skills and resources to manage maintenance and repair efficiently, and thus far the provincial governments are not investing in communities to achieve this. An important bonus of the parent–teacher groups may be local ownership and more parental participation in community schools.

'Female teachers in rural villages who are not in their hometowns often request and are granted transfers or temporary postings to places closer to district headquarters. Some of these postings are arranged because teachers are confronting [frequent and effective threats of violence].'

Policy and Program Initiatives To Increase Female Teachers In Rural Communities

In cultures where women's purity is highly valued, kidnap and rape are frequent and effective threats that intimidate women and restrict their mobility and performance of duties outside the domestic sphere of their families. Female teachers encounter very real obstacles to living and working in rural villages unless they are permanent local residents and live with their families. They are frightened to travel to their rural posts or to leave the shelter of the school once they are there. Besides dangers on the road, teachers who commute also face travel costs, which may consume a disproportionate percentage of their salaries.* In communities that do not offer living facilities in a safe family compound, some female teachers live in social isolation with no viable community role and status, while others are pressured to marry men in the community who regard their salary and education as resources to be won. Finally, female teachers in rural posts cannot look to a career ladder or professional future.

For all these reasons and more, female teachers in rural villages who are not in their hometowns often request and are granted transfers or temporary postings to places closer to district headquarters. Some of these postings are arranged because teachers are confronting the problems described above. Others are arranged because teachers accept posts they have no intention of filling on a permanent basis and have connections to ensure that they never take up residence in the post to which they were assigned. These practices leave rural schools empty but teaching positions encumbered and salaries unavailable. Thus, schools whose teachers are detained elsewhere cannot recruit new teachers.

*In North-West Frontier Province urban teachers receive a travel allowance, but rural teachers do not. Until recently, it was assumed that women with rural postings lived in the village. Thus no travel expense was foreseen for teachers in remote villages, whereas urban teachers were known to travel from their homes on one side of town to jobs on the other side and thus needed a travel allowance to get to work.

Box 2. 'Genderless' Schools in North-West Frontier Province

In North-West Frontier Province during PED, almost 40 percent of schools constructed were girls' schools. Now, with donor support, North-West Frontier Province is embarking on a radical solution to gender disparities and inefficiencies imposed by supplying separate-sex schools to far-flung communities with small numbers of students. All new government schools will henceforth be "genderless," meaning built for girls as well as boys. With this policy, the government is claiming freedom from any donor requirements for gender equity in construction.

This is less a boon for girls than it appears at first glance, since many of the girls from families who accept mixed-sex education are already enrolled in boys' schools. The hope and expectation is that, over time, communities will increasingly accept mixing the sexes in the classrooms, more girls will attend local schools, more parents will allow their girls to continue beyond grade 3 (the informal cutoff for acceptability of girls in mixed classrooms), and communities will exert more oversight on male teachers to minimize sexual harassment.

In some communities boys may benefit from mixed-sex schools. The boys currently enrolled in girls' schools are generally there because their families believe that women are better teachers of young children, less likely to be sexually abusive or violent, and more likely to be patient with children's needs for play and learning at their own pace. If the genderless designation is simply a good cover for the continued inequitable investments in boys' facilities, boys will benefit less than if genderless schools are truly mixed-sex schools, held to standards of conduct appropriate for boys as well as girls, and offering more female teachers, which creates a better environment for learning.

North-West Frontier Province: a distribution problem. At PED's inception, North-West Frontier Province had a distribution—not a production—problem with teachers. Teachers were concentrated in urban areas rather than distributed where they were needed. The absolute number of teachers was more than adequate, leading the unions and the education establishment to oppose the recruitment of more rural female teachers. Declaring that all new schools will be genderless was in part a response to the shortage of female teachers in rural areas, since male teachers do not encounter the same problems as female teachers when they are assigned to remote areas, and thus the surplus of teachers can be partially absorbed by assigning men to rural posts. Another important response to the distribution problem was to eliminate temporary courtesy or hardship postings, except in cases of demonstrated need. Now most teachers will have to stay and teach at the post to which they are assigned, a policy essential to rationalizing the assignment of teachers and filling posts in remote schools.

Balochistan: a supply and distribution problem. Balochistan faced a different problem—an absolute shortage of female teachers that was most acute in rural areas. PED planners and technical advisers came up with both policy and program responses. Educational qualifications and age requirements for new teachers were relaxed for female candidates who reside in rural villages with village educational committees. A new rapid teacher-certification program was approved: the primary teacher accreditation certificate was awarded after a three-month condensed version of the nine-month primary teacher certificate course. Training for the accreditation certificate was offered at the district level to practicing uncertified teachers and also to girls and women being recruited by NGOs to teach in rural villages participating in the Community Support Program.

The Community Support Program initiative was a critical element of the response to the teacher shortage. By mobilizing communities to find potential teachers among their own women, this initiative ensured that community members were invested in the success of the teacher and the school she ran. For the new teachers, the village education committees in many towns became essential sources of support, guidance, and encouragement.

Gender Issues In Access Strategies

The education establishment apparently did not realize that through the Community Support Program, powerless women and girls in remote communities were going to ignite community involvement in education. The very insignificance of the beneficiaries and female stakeholders opened the doors for innovation and active participation of women—and men—in the schooling of girls. Over the long term, educating girls may bring significant changes in gender roles, raising the status of women. In the short term, the Community Support Program has given women in villages a taste of active participation in civil society. For most women in villages, participating in the activities of the women's village education committee was their first responsibility in the public domain. The interaction with village promoters offered a unique opportunity to work with new female role models in the mold of professional community organizer Quartul Ain Bakhteari, a Pakistani woman and designer of the community support process.

'Over the long term, educating girls may bring significant changes in gender roles, raising the status of women. In the short term, the Community Support Program has given women in villages a taste of active participation in civil society.'

Paradoxically, the Community Support Program still reinforces the gender status quo by placing authority and control of resources in the hands of men. The "big" decisions are still exclusively made by men—where a school will be built (land must be donated, and men own the land), who will build it (men), who will maintain it (men), and who will staff it (a woman chosen, or at least approved, by the men of the village). Although women and girls are the target beneficiaries and stakeholders, they are not in control. The women's village educational committees play support functions, not management or executive functions.

Over the long term, male hegemony is costly. Some costs are higher for girls' than for boys' schools because of gender discrimination. For example, UNICEF donated motorbikes to the North-West Frontier Province for male teachers and learning coordinators in remote areas. The government accepted the donation and agreed to pay recurrent costs. UNICEF was prepared to donate jeeps for female teachers, because women do not ride motorbikes. The government refused the donation. It was unwilling to assume the higher recurrent costs associated with the vehicles. Transport for women is so restricted by gender boundaries and harassment that schools are left unstaffed.

Despite gross inefficiencies resulting from separation of the sexes, neither province has actively tried to challenge gender discrimination against or by teachers. Female education is inherently revolutionary in a society built on sharply differentiated gender roles and rights. The PED Program has walked a cautious and conservative line, supporting innovation and change while minimizing resistance by not pushing too hard against obstacles posed by traditional gender differences.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF GIRLS' EDUCATION

Slightly more than 5 percent of the PED budget went toward improving educational quality. A PED administrator observed that when the program began, "quality was left to other donors—the primary raison d'être for USAID support was to increase access to schooling." Nevertheless, PED technical and financial assistance for program initiatives laid a foundation for increasing academic achievement and completion, reducing the high dropout rate, and improving efficiency. Those initiatives trained teachers, developed curriculum, adopted phonetics for teaching Urdu, formalized kindergarten, and designed and distributed instructional materials.

'Female education is inherently revolutionary in a society built on sharply differentiated gender roles and rights. The PED Program has walked a cautious and conservative line, supporting innovation and change while minimizing resistance by not pushing too hard.'

Stakeholder Definitions Of Quality Education

In contrast to the widely shared goal of increasing girls' access to school, there was, and is, little consensus among stakeholders about what constitutes educational quality. Some opinions shared with the authors include the following:

- Teachers' daily presence in the classroom and children learning something new every day (village education committee members)
- School facilities in good repair and educational materials, such as writing slates and textbooks, in the school (rural parents)
- Students' and teachers' achievement of the national curriculum objectives (national and provincial education professionals)
- Student-centered classrooms; optimal student achievement commensurate with ability for girls and boys (international technical advisers and donors)

PED sought to boost quality by improving instructional materials, supporting training and certification of teachers, and, in North-West Frontier Province, developing a process of achievement testing and data collection and dissemination.

Student Achievement

Criterion-referenced testing of functional numeracy and rote literacy. The evaluation team administered a short individual assessment test of basic literacy and numeracy to a sample of students in girls' schools in two rural districts of each province.

Second-grade students in all schools were functionally numerate, and grade 3 girls were able to read Urdu. North-West Frontier Province girls read better and earlier, probably because teachers and children have more exposure to spoken and printed Urdu than in Balochistan and because teachers in North-West Frontier Province have more training and experience. The team did not test comprehension, but it was evident that some students in both provinces did not understand what they read. Rote recitation is acceptable in Koranic studies and apparently in schools as well.

No baseline data exist against which to compare these results. The outcome suggests, though, that notwithstanding problems with quality, girls who persist through 3rd grade in rural village schools do achieve functional numeracy and rote literacy in Urdu.

North-West Frontier Province Educational Assessment Program (NEAP). This program provides another source of data on student achievement of both boys and girls. NEAP was an ambitious and important initiative to introduce standard testing in a system where teacher-designed classroom tests prevailed. The NEAP data suggest that students in North-West Frontier Province master about half of the material covered in the primary curriculum, and that girls' achievement in early grades lags behind boys'.

A comparison of the NEAP results in 1993–94 and 1995–96 is somewhat encouraging. It suggests that girls' and boys' achievement in grades 3 and 5 is improving throughout the province. Although the time frame is too short to analyze trends, the data suggest that rural girls—PED's target group—consistently performed least well in math, but in 1995–96 they scored better than all other groups in science, Urdu, and Pashto (a language with roots in Iran). In grades 3 and 5, boys scored higher than girls in math, with urban boys scoring the highest of any group. As for overall class results, in 1993–94, students in grade 3 scored above 50 percent on just two tests, science and Urdu. Two years later their math scores had also risen above 50 percent. Fifth-grade students marked similar gains, scoring more than 50 percent on Urdu, Pashto, and math.

'Equally demoralizing for young children is the teacher-centered method of teaching. Young children are expected to sit all day and learn entirely by rote.'

Although the rising scores are encouraging, percentages of correctly answered questions remain low: no group of students scored above 80 percent in any subject. Most students had not mastered the curriculum. When experienced teachers enrolled in teacher colleges were tested, they hardly performed better than the students. It was thus not surprising that their students lacked mastery of the material.

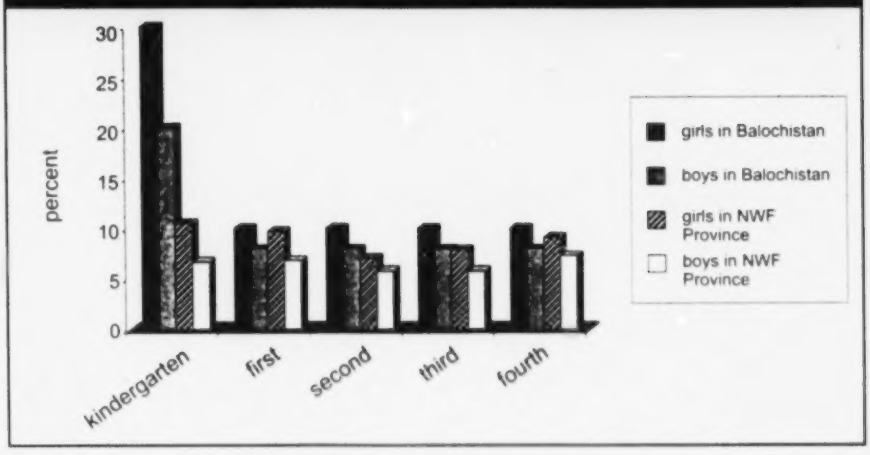
Completion

Only about a tenth of female students (about 3 percent of all girls) in Balochistan and less than a third in North-West Frontier Province make it through grade 5.[1] Completion rates for male students are almost twice as high. PED met its modest targets for declines in dropout rates. Nevertheless, annual dropout rates remain close to 10 percent and repetition rates well above 5 percent and are significantly higher for the first two years of school in Balochistan. Teachers and administrators seem unconcerned about these outcomes. Coupled with a widespread notion that most children will not and can not complete primary school is a nonchalance about the effects on children of repeated and widespread repetition.

Adding kindergarten to the primary cycle was expected to contribute to girls' persistence in school but does not appear to have done so (see figure 3). This disappointing outcome may be due to the developmentally inappropriate kindergarten curriculum, which is essentially the same as the first grade curriculum. Equally demoralizing for young children is the teacher-

[1] The provinces do not report completion data. These values are estimated from 5th and kindergarten grade enrollment, dropout, and retention rates.

Figure 3. Dropout Rates by Grade, Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province, 1994



centered method of teaching. Young children are expected to sit still all day and learn almost entirely by rote. Teachers are not educated about developmental stages and appropriate learning environments for young children. Not surprisingly, despite the addition of kindergarten, the proportion of children who do not want to continue in school, and whose families do not see enough value in school to continue to send them, remains unchanged.

Program Strategies For Improving The Quality of Education

Except for the addition of kindergarten to the primary cycle and the creation of the directorates of primary education, which was expected to indirectly improve the professionalism of teachers, the PED strategy to improve the quality of primary education concentrated on programmatic interventions rather than system reform or policy change. It included

- Improved curriculum and instructional materials. Equity was to be addressed as quality was improved; materials with equal numbers of girls and boys represented were designed.
- Development of appropriate teaching methods to go with the materials (in North-West Frontier Province).
- Increased coverage (but not improved quality) of teacher certification training.
- Improved capacity and performance of teacher supervisors.
- Education management information systems to monitor indicators of quality (such as dropout rates, repetition, achievement, pupil–teacher ratios, teacher training).
- Community participation and support to improve teacher attendance, teacher performance, and school maintenance.

In Pakistan curriculum is controlled at the federal level. Instructional materials based on the federally defined curriculum are designed, produced, and distributed by the provinces. Royalties associated with distribution and marketing of instructional materials were the bread and butter of the provincial textbook boards, which resisted new materials that competed with their existing stocks. PED instructional materials in North-West Frontier Province were never used beyond 300 pilot schools, owing to resistance from the textbook boards and competitive donor initiatives.

Several PED quality initiatives in North-West Frontier Province did not target girls, but they were successful and may have improved the quality of education available to girls. In that province, 12 exemplary teachers, half of them women, were trained to develop teaching materials. They formed into a new instructional materials development cell in the directorates

of primary education. The instructional materials they designed for kindergarten through 3rd grade were piloted in 300 schools. Students taught with those materials showed improved achievement, but resistance from the textbook board and competing materials supported by other donors restricted implementation to pilot sites. Somewhat later in Balochistan, the instructional materials development and training cell began operation in the directorates of primary education. Cell members developed maps, student texts, teachers' guides, active learning materials, and other support materials for kindergarten and 1st grade.

PED institutionalized a materials testing and feedback process in both Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province. Before completing and distributing new materials, scores of teachers pretest the materials in schools and give their feedback to the curriculum developers. Materials are revised, reviewed by subject-area experts, and tested once again. The PED curriculum and materials adviser in North-West Frontier Province succeeded in persuading the federal curriculum reform committee to include a phonetic approach to language instruction in the new national curriculum. A three-year interactive radio program for grades 2 through 5 to learn English was developed and implemented. The program is being considered for expansion with World Bank support. The consideration is based on a year-long assessment that documented effective implementation and strong demand not only from target audiences but also from diverse segments of the listening public.

In Balochistan, PED placed more emphasis on instructional materials, and less dialog took place about curriculum and teaching methods. More attractive visuals and more durable books were distributed and used throughout the province, but the improvements were largely cosmetic. Little improvement came about in inducing teachers to change the way they use materials, although that is now a theme of the successor program. Fifty percent of illustrations in the new materials are about girls and women, some in the professional roles of teacher or doctor.

The materials development and training cells and the new systematic approaches to testing products continue to be supported by UNICEF and the World Bank. Funds from the Netherlands are extending and expanding the curriculum and materials efforts.

As yet little data exists showing how the new materials have affected quality and efficiency. Dropout rates have fallen slightly, and 3rd-grade completion rates are improving. These trends may indicate improvement in quality or greater commitment in communities and schools to primary education. But dropout rates have not changed from kindergarten to 1st grade, for which new materials were developed in both provinces. The team was unable to obtain dropout and completion data for the subset of 300 schools where PED materials are used in North-West Frontier Province.

Research on the PED materials used by trained teachers showed student mastery above 80 percent on the North-West Frontier Province Educational Assessment Program tests, far surpassing achievement of children using standard curriculum materials. PED sought from the start to coordinate donor inputs to optimize quality and maximize efficiency. Although PED's pursuit of an integrated process was rebuffed in the early 1990s (three parallel materials development initiatives—PED, UNICEF, and the German Technical Cooperation Agency—were under way), integration is now becoming a reality. Not only are PED products being used, but also the pretesting, feedback, and review process for materials development has been institutionalized. The PED materials are now being combined with other donor-sponsored materials into a new generation of integrated instructional materials that will be distributed all over the province.

Increasing the Quality And Availability Of Teacher Education

PED supported accelerated teacher education, offering in the districts compressed 3-month versions of the 12-month primary training curriculum from the teacher training colleges. There is no evidence that PED training improves teaching, but PED-trained teachers appear to be as proficient as teachers who have taken the traditional year-long training course.

'In Balochistan the supply of female teachers increased by more than a third in five years; the number of male teachers increased by almost one fourth in the same period. [Yet] these increases . . . fall below the trend line for achieving PED targets.'

Pupil–teacher ratios have improved under PED. In 1994, ratios were less that 50 to 1 in 81 percent of girls' schools and 85 percent of boys' schools (up from 76 percent and unchanged from 85 percent, respectively) in Balochistan. In North-West Frontier Province the figures were 85 percent of girls' schools and 91 percent of boys' schools (up from 65 percent and 85 percent, respectively).

In Balochistan the supply of female teachers increased by more than a third in five years; the number of male teachers increased by almost one fourth in the same period. Although these increases are substantial, they fall below the trend line for achieving PED targets. In 1998, 1,200 additional teachers needed to be turned out annually by new teacher education colleges to achieve PED's original goals.

When PED began, North-West Frontier Province did not have a shortage of teachers, but it did have a distribution problem. The supply of female teachers increased by half, and the supply of male teachers by more than half during the same period, but it is too early to assess the effects of genderless schools and male teachers on girls' education.

Gender and Educational Quality

When PED began, single-sex schools were the only schools operating. The international literature suggests that girls who go to single-sex schools achieve more, both in school and in their lives after school. Although the gender discrimination that underlies the pattern of single-sex schooling in Pakistan is not progressive in any way, at least it is reasonable to assume that girls benefit from being schooled separately from boys.

PED research revealed that a few girls attended boys' schools in areas where there were no girls' schools. It also revealed that a few boys attended girls' schools because their families believed they would get a better education. These findings shattered the illusion that two satisfactory single-sex systems were in operation. Once the gender barrier was shown to be slightly pervious, North-West Frontier Province decreed that all new schools constructed would be designated "genderless." Doing so evaded the high costs of supplying single-sex schools to far-flung communities with low enrollments. The cynical view is that genderless schools enable the government to use donor funds for sustained investments in what are, in fact, boys' schools.

Because there are no initiatives planned to train teachers about managing gender in their classrooms, mixing boys with girls probably will

have a negative effect on the quality of girls' education. In light of strict differentiation of gender roles, this aspect of quality should be explored and addressed. Gender-balanced illustrations in texts are not a sufficient response. Senior women educators in Pakistan are concerned that the genderless initiative will rob girls of the opportunity to get an unbiased education in girls' schools and leave them more vulnerable to inequitable treatment and poor-quality education in genderless schools.

CONCLUSIONS

The success of the PED initiative is evident in the data: in Balochistan almost three times as many girls were enrolled in primary school in 1996 as were enrolled in 1989; more than twice as many were enrolled in North-West Frontier Province in the same time frame. These are remarkable achievements, particularly for a program that functioned less than five years and suffered a year-long hiatus because of USAID evacuation early in its implementation.

'In Balochistan almost three times as many girls were enrolled in primary school in 1996 as were enrolled in 1989; more than twice as many are enrolled in North-West Frontier Province. These are remarkable achievements . . . for a program that functioned less than five years and suffered a year-long hiatus.'

USAID's Leadership Role

To this day, remarkable unanimity exists among stakeholders that by designing and implementing PED, USAID played a unique, high-impact leadership rol ı education in Pakistan. Counterparts repeatedly bemoaned USAID's departure—and it wasn't the money they missed. They missed long-term active engagement, policy dialog, clear direction without micromanagement, technical savvy, and strategic systems thinking. USAID's contributions included the following:

1. *Systems thinking, leading to program and policy initiatives, not projects.* Anticipating a dynamic interactive relationship with counterparts, USAID/Pakistan made an early decision to take a program and policy approach to education rather than to design and implement a project. Most of the PED funds were a sector support grant with clear goals and conditions and few strings attached.

2. *Concentration on a goal.* Dialog between USAID technical staff and the design team resulted in wise choices. The priority target they identified—increasing girls' education—was one poised for change as modern media papered the walls of rural community compounds with waves of information about modernization. Other targets, such as combating corruption, might have been "worthy" and played well in the American press, but local vested interests would have made a losing battle out of a direct attack on the informal system of construction, job handouts, and skimming.

3. *Long-term strategic planning.* Years after USAID's departure, its plan still guides government and donor initiatives. New private partners for government, new government institutions for primary education, and information management systems were founded to help sustain the progress made in education. Because USAID's direction was lost midcourse, some of the longer term goals were aborted, but the achievements appear sustainable.

4. *Technical assistance teams appropriate to—and resident in—each province.* The two provinces are very different economically, culturally, and administratively. The problems, possibilities, and obstacles were different, and so were the technical assistance teams. The team leader in North-West Frontier Province was a seasoned education professional who led his team on a deliberate pursuit of planned, information-based, managed systems. Although many of the quality initiatives emphasized in North-West Frontier Province were implemented in only 300 schools, girls' access soared, decentralization and management of data was achieved, and primary girls' district education offices are in place. The team leader in Balochistan was a management expert, a politically savvy bureaucratic player, and a risk taker. He teamed up with compatible counterparts, stimulated and supported institutional development, and saw an internationally recognized effort build visible momentum. His successor complemented his style with technical leadership, which consolidated PED's achievements. Continuation of the Balochistan team with World Bank support and coordinated donor support for the team leader in North-West Frontier Province are endorsements of USAID's approach.

5. *A strong technical profile.* The technical assistance teams handled the technical program support and advised both USAID and counterparts on program and policy issues, but USAID handled the policy dialog. These distinct roles complemented one another; counterparts knew where final decision-making resided. Technical assistance teams could be responsive to counterparts on program issues and rely on USAID for policy leadership and dialog with counterparts.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Commitment to educating girls, communicated consistently by diverse leaders through multiple channels to a wide range of audiences, appears to have been critical to broad increases in girls' education. Many obstacles to girls' education derive from gender-role expectations of families and policymakers. The clear shared goal of enrolling more girls in primary school, supported with programs, policy changes, and community and school-level investments, seems to have helped change social norms about schooling girls. It also aligned the efforts of stakeholders at every level of the educational system, from the secretary of education to fathers in isolated villages who know (even if they don't agree) that schooling girls is important.

It was the right goal for the time and the context. Urbanization and mass communication had intruded on traditional gender expectations even in remote communities, and families felt they must equip their daughters for the modern world. The momentum of this initiative is so broad that it appears sustainable even where good-faith performance by the government can be questioned, as is the case with the gender ratio of school construction in Balochistan.

2. Alignment toward a goal facilitates decentralization, community participation, and innovation. The latter two are probably necessary to achieve the magnitude of shifts in social norms required to change practices related to gender roles in traditional societies. The broad based buy-in to the goal led to sustained efforts that did not require direct management and in many instances constituted significant in-kind support for the PED initiative. Unless government and donors sabotage the process by reneging on commitments to the community, PED appears to have initiated a lasting shift in social norms and girls' access to education.

3. If there are no incentives for change, a program approach in an unchanged policy environment may not have a systemwide impact on the quality of education. Poor quality of schooling typically is more detrimental to girls' school participation than to boys', because de-

mand for girls' schooling is weaker and the changes in social norms are still fluid. PED progress on quality improvements was not negligible. But relative to the rapid and significant progress on increasing girls' enrollments, progress on quality was slow and is a potential threat to sustaining and advancing PED achievements.

PED catalyzed a revolution in ideas and actions to increase girls' participation in education. A revolution of similar magnitude is needed with regard to academic quality. Such a revolution probably will require similar strategic coordination of program and policy efforts. At PED's inception there seems to have been awareness that teacher training was inadequate and quality was poor, but there was no vision of an alternative and no latent demand for it. There was no strategic interplay of USAID conditionalities, no policy dialog with counterparts, and no guidance by technical advisers about quality.

The most successful step toward improving educational quality was the informal advisory role to the national curriculum reform taken by a North-West Frontier Province technical adviser. It resulted in successful integration of a phonetic approach to Urdu instruction. The rest of the quality improvements have not been widely implemented or are substantively cosmetic, such as new materials in Balochistan and increased numbers of teachers whose certification training does not improve their teaching. The exceptions are the North-West Frontier Province Educational Assessment Program testing system and the formalization of kindergarten. These successes were strategically suited to the context; they were new initiatives adding to, rather than replacing, existing programs and thus did not face as much resistance as other efforts.

4. Policy emphasis on quality might have led to institutionalization of quality improvements, which in turn would contribute to the sustainability of gains in girls' access to schooling. PED succeeded in achieving a single goal—increasing girls' access to schooling—by consistently pursuing it with every policy and program resource at hand. The PED approach to *quality* was different; it was heavy on program inputs, with little policy modification to create a context and incentive for change. USAID did not undertake a role in policy leadership, and in the absence of policy changes, school quality did not significantly improve.

Over the long term, poor quality contributes to low persistence and completion rates, high dropout and repetition rates, and system inefficiencies. Absence of a vision and demand for better quality schooling, and competition for program resources, blunted efforts to improve quality.

5. Unrealistically high standards for teacher and student achievement do not lead to better performance. Instead, they appear to reinforce notions that girls are not capable and contribute to patterns of high dropout and repetition rates. Teacher-centered teaching methods and developmentally challenging curricula characterize education at every grade. Younger children, many of whom speak no Urdu, face the greatest frustration. Since girls are concentrated in the early grades, they suffer proportionately. Furthermore, many primary teachers have not mastered the material they teach. That ensures that many students will not learn it.

Not surprisingly, these features of education in the two provinces result in high rates of student failure and thus widespread belief that many children cannot learn. It also results in a tolerance for high rates of dropouts and repetitions. Combined with cultural emphases on the limitations of females, failure and repetition undermine the self-efficacy of girls and their persistence in school.

6. Boys have benefited as much as or more than girls from PED's program innovations and quality efforts. In absolute numbers, boys' schools increased significantly more than girls'. Community participation in education,

pioneered by PED to get girls into school, also promises to improve quality, increase access, and reduce abuse of boys in schools. The success of PED is built on developing and strengthening primary education institutions, supplying more schools and teachers where they are needed, improving the teaching tools for primary schools, and increasing community participation in schools. All data, both quantitative and qualitative, show that these have directly benefited boys as much as or more than girls.

7. Gender discrimination leads to distortions of supply and demand and limits the effectiveness and efficiency of strategies for system reform. Policy and program actions that require changes in gender role norms reduce these distortions. Historically, demand for girls' education was minimal, because traditional gender roles limited female mobility and life options. Now, modernization, population pressure, urbanization, and mass media are changing some aspects of gender roles, and demand for female education is strong.

Nonetheless, much gender discrimination remains, and it creates inefficiencies in the supply of and access to primary education. For example, harassment, intimidation, and community rejection underlie the inadequate supply of rural female teachers. Instead of challenging these gender inequities, the education system treats them as "givens," fixed realities that must be circumvented—for example, by supplying cars and drivers for rural female teachers. Circumventing gender discrimination rather than changing it sharply raises the costs of female education and impedes its progress.

Giving opportunities to women does not eliminate inefficiency unless gender discrimination diminishes. Powerless women with resources are targets of male opportunism. Some husbands, fathers, and brothers commandeer salaries and government benefits of women teachers, but at the same time interfere with their work. Time and again district officials and head teachers bemoaned the fact that some female teachers cannot perform because of personal problems. Supervisors did not have solutions to their teachers' gender-role anxieties.

For the most part, PED did not directly address gender discrimination; educating girls was seen as enough of a social revolution. One notable exception was USAID's insistence on the inclusion of women managers at every meeting. This action was significant because women managers are essential in these gender-segregated societies, and not just because of principles of equity. Men do not have access to enough information about women and girls to make informed policy and program decisions, and women in positions of authority serve as important role models for girls.

There is still a dearth of women in decision-making positions from the highest levels of the primary education establishment to the grass-roots level of village education committees. The female village education committees gave many women their first experiences in civil society. However, although the female committees have taken on significant responsibility for the operation of their schools, resources and authorities are firmly in the hands of the male committees.

8. Three-way partnerships (such as government–private sector–community, or government–donor–technical assistance) empower more stakeholders, facilitate innovation, and minimize deadlock better than two-way partnerships. For example, the government initiatives here failed twice to create community education committees. The Community Support Program initiative demonstrates a three-way partnership that works. Men and women of the villages give thought, time, and resources to school committees, projects, and teachers. NGOs bring community studies, strategic organizing, and transfer of expertise to give communities the wherewithal they need to begin a process of proactive civic participa-

tion. Government brings the resources for sustainability and incentives to stimulate community investment. In light of the demonstrated success of the three-way model, perhaps as decentralization proceeds, more resources will be shared among governments, NGOs, and communities.

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